

## ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY SERVICES

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### ABSTRACT

*The rise of social media technologies have created new ways to seek and share information for millions of users worldwide. The paper also highlights the issues concerning the role of social media in library services. Social media has transformed the patterns of providing library services to users. It has the power to build up a close bond between libraries and their patrons. Social media, although a relatively recent phenomenon has become a part and parcel of our everyday life. Social media presents a good number of opportunities for libraries as well for improving means of providing the library services to the patrons. The present paper is an attempt to provide an overview of current practices relating to the use of social media by libraries. It is clear from the scrutiny of literature that the involvement of social media in library services has improved the mode of information flow from library to users. Although the literature also connotes some issues and challenges associated with application of social media in libraries but overall social media reflects itself as a boon for libraries & users as well.*

**Keyword:** social media, social networking sites, library services, library resources

### INTRODUCTION

Social media has become a popular tool used in the libraries to market library science and resources to users. Libraries use social media to carry out a variety of activities for maximizing the use of the library resources. Current usage of social media by the library community generally remains ad hoc and somewhat experimental but the uptake of these tools is accelerating and they will likely play an increasingly important role in library service provision and outreach in the future. Use of social media for enhancing teaching and learning is currently lower priority, but this will likely become an important activity in the near future, and librarians with their growing experience of using social media tools are well-placed to help develop institutional capabilities.

### SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking is a way of using computer to talk other people, exchange pictures, whatever you want to do. The distinguish feature of a social network site is the ability to upload a personal profile. Social networking sites allow librarians to adopt a new role by placing themselves into a social realm with users. By reading blogs, group posting and message boards, the librarian becomes an active participant, who is able to anticipate and advise patrons as needs arise. Linking to patron profiles also keeps the library within the consciousness of users, potentially increasing interaction. Today adults have joined the networking with each other and some of the useful sites are as under; social networking.

**Facebook:** Facebook is amongst the most popular social networking sites. It is librarian-friendly with many applications like JSTOR search, World Cat and much more. Librarians can interact with users to know their information needs.

**LinkedIn:** LinkedIn social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the specialist in their particular field of interest via LinkedIn.

**Flicker:** There is a less scope for socializing here, but you can upload and share any pictures you want others to see. You can also download and sometimes use pictures on websites, as many people put them up with few copyright restrictions.

**Twitter:** The Twitter is a free microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.

**Blogs:** Blogs helps to disseminate information to lotsof people at one time. Librarians can periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject or issue and allow users to contribute to content. They can write articles, news on topical issues and expect an instant reaction from their users.

## **OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES**

Librarians have several objectives that they are using social media to help them achieve, which can be summarized as follows:

- I. Advertising events, services, information and presence.
- II. Encouraging collaboration trends likewise specifying collection development repository building of collaborative content specific to certain user groups.
- III. Collecting user opinions regarding library services for evaluation purposes & to promote discussions to initiate an opportunity to respond to library user feedback.
- IV. Establishing connections with other libraries to keep current in the field.
- V. Enhancing the usage of library resources by promoting new and existing content.

## **ADVANTAGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES**

**Advantages and benefits for librarians and libraries when using social media are seen to be:**

- I. Financial competence: The costs of using social media are perceived to be low. Thus they prove to be beneficial in terms of Financial competence.
- II. Promotion of library services: Social media applications prove to be more quick and direct disseminators of information to library users by Advertising library services.
- III. Increased library networking through data sharing & other connections.
- IV. Increased involvement and interaction with library users.
- V. Enhancing user services by gathering user feedback.

## **CHALLENGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES**

- I. Increased work load is the other possible threat as the library needs to work hard to maintain engagement with library users and attract popularity followers & likes.

- II. Internet connectivity, technological infrastructure and government restrictions on the use of social media may restrict access and create hurdles in the smooth flow of information via social media channel
- III. We are a small, rural library with only three full-time employees, so our social media time is limited.
- IV. Copyright issues are the great concerns in the social media such as YouTube to build collection.

## LITERATUREREVIEW

Cooper and May(2009) describe implementation of a blog at a small academic library in Alabama as a tool in reaching out to the students, regardless of their presence on campus or previous affinity with the library. Draper and Turnage(2008) survey of 265 academic librarians found that blogs were overwhelmingly used to market library service.

Hendrix and Zaffron (2009) found that the main purpose of using Facebook in libraries is to market the library and push out announcements to library users for promotional purposes. In order to have a presence in the social network, libraries post photos and provide chat reference service. Burkhardt (2009) identified that libraries can market their services and events by using fliers, bookmarks, announcements in calendars of events, newspaper ads, press releases.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media acts as an effective outreach tool for librarians to market library resources, informational communication with users, creating virtual spaces, networking & collaborating with other libraries. Social media not only enhances the practical usability in the library but also helps librarians add value to their profession, given the value or potential of a librarian being questioned in the information landscape. Libraries should be facilitated with internet services and develop their web page and social media page. However, at the same time, there is a significant level of confusion, skepticism, resistance and even fear surrounding the use of these technologies within the workplace by many librarians. A suitable plan and strong evaluation needs to be looked while pioneering social networks in libraries.

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